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ABSTRACT

A test developed to assess alienation in sixth grade Spanish American students was administered to migrant students in Grades 4-8. Validity studies indicate that the test may have been too difficult for the grade levels and cultural characteristics of that group. Recommendations for further testing are included. (See TM 000 995 for a copy of the instrument.) (AG)

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ALIENATION EVALUATION FOR MIGRANT PROGRAMS*

by

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During the third Migrant Summer Program of a public school during 1970, it was decided that the alienation and acculturation instruments developed by Cordova would be used to assess attitudinal change. For the purpose of this paper, only the alienation scale is considered.

The definition of alienation and its four factors to be measured were:

Alienation - a feeling of estrangement from a social system and a feeling of self-estrangement in that situation.

Factors:

Normlessness - a low expectancy on the part of the individual that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve the given goals stressed by that social system or collectively.

Powerlessness - a low expectancy on the part of an individual that he can, through his own behavior, achieve any of the rewards he seeks.

Self-estrangement- a situation in which there is a lack of intrinsic meaning in activities the individual engages in.

Isolation - a situation in which the individual assigns low reward value to the goals or beliefs that are highly valued in that situation.

(Cordova, 1969, p.17)

In light of the felt educational and social needs of these migrant children, the six week program was intended to:

1. Improve skills in mathematics and reading.
2. Encourage student competition and instill pride.
3. Help eliminate inferiority feelings.
4. Advance each student's will to succeed by giving him or her chance to succeed.
5. Help the student learn to enjoy school rather than to dislike it.
6. Give each student an opportunity to receive a broader education and to see some of the finer things of life.

7. Provide the migrant farm children in this area with enjoyable and meaningful experiences that will enable them to have a better chance to succeed in regular school.

The instrument was administered verbally to the migrant students in grades four through eight since it was assumed that lack of reading proficiency might hinder test comprehension. There were a total of 55 pre-test and 42 post test subjects. It was decided that the administration of the test would be the same for all groups since it was assumed that the treatment would not adversely affect the ability of the students to respond in the same environmental melieu.

TEST VALIDITY To substantiate test validity, Varimax Rotated factor analysis was utilized for the major portion of the data evaluation. When the combined pre and post data for the alienation measure were reduced to eight factors, a dispersed grouping of items was noted. Sequential reduction to four factors showed the need to remove items due to low or double factor loadings and semantic inappropriatness. Again utilizing the Varimax Rotated Analysis technique but separating the data into respective pre ($n_1 = 55$) and post ($n_2 = 42$) data sets, the four calculated factors showed little relationship when compared by group responses. A total of eleven items loaded within three of the four previously defined factor groupings and the pre and post response data. Of these eleven items, number 23, "How often do you find yourself enjoying your school work?", was considered to be poorly worded since only a true to false scale was provided. Upon finding that item 19 measured the same assumed construct, item 23 was deleted. The remaining ten items were factor analyzed under three factors combining the pre and post data. Item 13 loaded on two of the three programmed factors but was left in due

to usefulness in the semantic context of factor III, Isolation Sub-type of Alienation. The ten remaining "legitimate" items and their respective factor loadings are presented below:

FIGURE I

Varimax Rotated Factor Loadings for the Alienation Scale, 3 Factors, 10 Items

No.	I	II	III	Items
				ISOLATION SUB-TYPE OF ALIENATION
44	73	-14	-14	In general, I do my work only because I have to.
46	67	11	27	How often do you wish you were out of school?
49	57	01	23	Do you ever think of quitting school?
50	72	08	-17	How often do you feel that you would rather do something else.
54	61	13	-06	School would not be much fun if students obeyed the rules all of the time.
				SELF-ESTRANGEMENT CATEGORY
10	06	81	-16	Most students enjoy doing as well as they can at school.
13	01	64	40	Though much of my time and effort has been spent doing homework, there have been many rewards for it.
19	10	83	01	I find that I actually enjoy my school work most of the time.
				POWERLESSNESS CATEGORY
36	02	-01	65	Sometimes I cannot understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
39	-02	03	76	Sometimes I feel that I have given a large part of my life to my school with little to show for it.

Figure I Continued

2.34	1.73	1.29	Eigenvalue
23.43	40.77	53.64	Variance

The items were originally categorized in terms of sub-types of alienation in the following manner:

FIGURE 2

CATEGORY	ITEMS
Powerlessness	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 31, 34, 36*, 38, 40, 58
Normlessness	51, 52, 53, 54*, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60
Self-estrangement	4, 5, 7, 9, 10*, 11, 12, 13*, 15, 17, 18, 19*, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39*, 41, 43, 47
Isolation sub-type of alienation	20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 42, 44* 45, 46*, 49*, 50*

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*Shown to be legitimate in this analysis. See Table above.

Note: Items 23, 25, 26, 48 not included by test author.

(1969 p. 152)

Observing the results of this factor analysis (Fig. I), the Isolation sub-type of alienation contained the largest number of signifacant items. Of these five items, #54 originally was placed within the normlessness category. Semantically as well as from the loadings, this item appears to fit best within the Isolation factor (valuing something other than what the school requests -- a potentially escapist attitude.)

Within the self-estrangement category, three items were noted to have grouped throughout the final stages of factor analysis. The powerlessness category found itself with but two items, one of which, #39, was originally

classified in the self-estrangement category (Fig.2). Thus, not all items loaded within the original categories.

The normlessness category, having no significant loadings prior to the final reduction of factors, remained itemless in this analysis.

Practice dictates that at least four items relative to a given factor, be included in an instrument to be confident of measuring that factor. Since the last three categories contained less than four items each, confidence relating to measurement is low.

CONTENT VALIDITY Though this test was read to predominately bilingual respondents in grades four through eight, the wording of the items may have been too difficult for the grade levels and cultural characteristics of this particular group, though originally the test was intended for sixth grade bilingual students.

> Mr. Henderson:
>
> Here are 38 copies of your test. We gave it to the oldest students, and also started it in the next oldest group. We found that it is over their heads. By the time the teacher got one of the questions explained to where the student could understant it, he had just about answered it for him.
>
> The test appears to be designed for the secondary level rather than the elementary level.
>
> I do not think that the tests our oldest group (7th and 8th graders) have finished are valid. The students just did not understand the questions well enough.

Although the above correspondance from a participating teacher is subjective, it supports the idea that the test was not designed for the group to which it was administered. Further, this devolves upon the concept that any given test should be administered by trained personnel since clues to possible

inappropriateness of test administration can be seen in the above communication.

Considering specific items, there is some doubt as to the childrens' facility with certain words and phrases. For example:

Item 8 - "There is practically always a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get."

The words "practically", "direct", and "connection" might have proven obscure to the bilingual migrant students, particularly given their phrasing. As Sax states, "...statements should be clear to the respondent." (1968, p.228) Thus, unclear items might also contribute to test insensitivity.

Item 14 - "I generally expect good grades and I set my sights too high." The above constitutes a "double-barreled" question to which more than one answer can be given. Items numbered 9, 18, and 43, see appendix A, may be termed ambiguous since each possible answer is open to a wide spectrum of interpretation. Such wording of items is generally conceded to be inappropriate for questionnaire usage. (Oppenheim, 1966, p. 115)

Observing the following thirteen items, 14,20,22,23,24,25,26,45,47, 48,49,and 50, it was found that these questions request answers other than those listed on the Likert type scale. This may also have contributed to possible miscomprehension of the test.

DISCUSSION - The above analysis indicates that the instrument may not adequately measure alienation for the present sample. Conclusions regarding the use of the instrument on other samples will be left to the reader.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is suggested that the instrument be evaluated using larger samples.
2. Based upon appropriate analysis, the instrument should be rewritten to

compensate for the deficiencies indicated here, and others which may be discovered.

3. Consideration should be given to using the resulting instrument with a homogenous grouping of 6th grade students since the original instrument was designed specifically for this group.

4. Appropriate analysis of the instrument with other than 6th grade students should be accomplished prior to attempting the use of the instrument outside the 6th grade strata.

References Cited

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APPENDIX A

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HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THINGS?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn how you feel about school and how you feel about a variety of other things.

There are no right or wrong answers. Each person has the right to feel the way he does about things mentioned in this group of questions -- Answer each item exactly the way you feel, and be sure to answer all the items. Use the following way to describe your feelings.

1	2	3	4	5
True Most of the Time	Often True	Sometimes True	Seldom True	False

For example: If an item was -- "I like school"

If you like school most of the time, you answer by choosing answer "2". On the other hand if you never liked school then you answer number "5", and if your feelings were somewhere between true and false, you would pick the number of the answer that best describes the way you feel. Now try the questions: circle the number you choose.

1	2	3	4	5
True	Often True	Sometimes true	Seldom True	False

1. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Most students don't realize how much their grades depand on luck. 1 2 3 4 5

3. In the case of well prepared students there is rarely, if ever, such a thing as an unfair test. 1 2 3 4 5

4. School is alot of fun than just a means to a better future. 1 2 3 4 5

5. In general, when I'm in class I feel to some extent that I have a home away from home. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I never found it hard to improve my standing in class. 1 2 3 4 5

7. I actually like my subjects better this year than I did last year. 1 2 3 4 5

8. There is practically always a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get. 1 2 3 4 5

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9.	I usually become more interested in my subjects near the end of the semester or the end of the year than at the beginning.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Most students enjoy doing as well as they can at school.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Students usually do well in order to get good grades.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I have always been certain that I will finish high school.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	Though much of my time and effort has been spent doing homework, there have been many rewards for it.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I generally expect to get good grades and I set my sights too high.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	Sometimes I become so involved in my school work that I cannot think of anything else.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	I have never doubted that staying in school would lead to things I want out of life.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	Sometimes I enjoy myself at school and doing work just as much as when taking part in recreation.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I don't think that school has kept me from developing my mind or learning as much as I can.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	I find that I actually enjoy my school work most of the time.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	How often do you tell your teacher your own ideas about things you might do in class.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	Do you feel that you would like to participate more than you do in class?	1 2 3 4 5
22.	How often do you think students are asked for advice on how to run the school.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	How often do you find yourself enjoying your school work?	1 2 3 4 5

24.	Do you ever talk over problems with teachers outside of the class?	1 2 3 4 5
25.	How often do your teachers encourage you to do well in your school work.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	How often does your school provide opportunities to do the things you like to do best.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	It's very important for me to go to junior high school and high school after finishing elementary school.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	I figure my teachers know better than I what is good for the class or he or she would not be a teacher.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	Students should quiet down whenever a teacher comes into the room.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	In school the best people usually are good students.	1 2 3 4 5

LOOK AT THE SCALE AGAIN

1	2	3	4	5
False or Never True	Seldom True	Sometimes True	Often True	True

31.	Many times test questions tend to be so unrelated to class work that studying is really useless	1 2 3 4 5
32.	If I were not thinking about my future I would probably never go to school.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	In general, I don't feel too much at home when I'm in class.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	Sometimes it doesn't matter how hard you work in class, your grade is pretty much set when you first come in.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	This year I have not been as interested in many subjects in school as last year.	1 2 3 4 5

36.	Sometimes I cannot understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	My interest in my subjects usually becomes less with time.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	Sometimes I have doubts that I will be able to finish high school.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	Sometimes I feel that I have given a large part of my life to my school work with little to show for it.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	Even though, I would like to get good grades I try not to set my sights too high.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	I consider a lot of my school to be just another job--I do it just to get it over with.	1 2 3 4 5
42.	At times I have thought that I would be more happy if I were not going to school.	1 2 3 4 5
43.	In some ways I feel that school has held me back from developing my mind and learning as much as I can.	1 2 3 4 5
44.	In general I do my work only because I have to.	1 2 3 4 5
45.	How often do you do things at school that you would not do if it were up to you?	1 2 3 4 5
46.	How often do you wish you were out of school?	1 2 3 4 5
47.	How often do you think being a student has prevented you from getting things you desire in life?	1 2 3 4 5
48.	Do you feel that students are treated unfair in schools?	1 2 3 4 5
49.	Do you ever think of quitting school?	1 2 3 4 5
50.	How often do you feel that you would rather do something else.	1 2 3 4 5
51.	It's not fair to punish students for cheating when so many of them get away with it.	1 2 3 4 5

52. Good grades cannot be gotten without some degree of apple polishing or being a teacher's pet. 1 2 3 4 5

53. Many students get good grades because they have had help from friends or relatives for tests. 1 2 3 4 5

54. School would not be much fun if students obeyed the rules all of the time. 1 2 3 4 5

55. How I do in school work doesn't concern me too much. 1 2 3 4 5

56. The best way to get along in school is to mind your own business and do what you are told. 1 2 3 4 5

57. Sometimes a student has to sacrifice his studies to do the things he wants to do. 1 2 3 4 5

58. Sometimes I would have to stay out of school to do the things I would really like to do. 1 2 3 4 5

59. Often, I feel like disagreeing with my teachers. 1 2 3 4 5

60. Students who do everything their teachers tell them to do are not as happy as the other students. 1 2 3 4 5

Source: Ignacio R. Cordova, "Acculaturation, Achievement, and Alienation Among Spanish American Students", (unpublished dissertation, The University of New Mexico, 1968) Pp. 152-158.